



# ERASMUS+

## Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE)

**Application Form and Award Criteria:  
Some key aspects of a project proposal assessed by experts**

**Two types of Capacity Building projects you may choose from:**

- **Joint Projects:** aimed at benefitting mainly **HEIs** and achieving **impact at institutional / faculty level** in the Partner Country/ies
- **Structural Projects:** aimed at supporting reforms of **HE systems** and achieving **impact at national level** in the Partner Country/ies and / or regional level (where at least two Partner Countries of a given region are involved)

The **same Application Form and Award Criteria** (proposal assessment criteria)  
**for both types of projects**

## Application Form: Structure & Contents

### e-Form (PDF doc)

- A. **Identification of the applicant and other partners:** basic data on all project partners
- A. **Description of the project:** project summary; link b-n the project and Erasmus+ priorities (horizontal)
- A. **Specific information related to CBHE in HE projects:** link b-n the project and CBHE objectives & priorities



Erasmus+

Capacity Building in Higher  
Education

## Application Form: Structure & Contents

### Detailed Project Description (1)(Word doc)

- D. Quality of the project TEAM (WHO?) and the cooperation arrangements (HOW?):** *details about the partners, incl. their expertise; distribution of tasks & communication arrangements, communication and project management*
  
- D. Project characteristics and RELEVANCE:** *rationale for setting up a consortium; background of the project (WHY?); European added value, innovative character*

## Application Form: Structure & Contents

### Detailed Project Description (2) (Word doc)

**F. Quality of the project DESIGN and implementation:** *how objectives & results will be achieved (activities, methodology, budget and cost effectiveness, QA and monitoring)*

**G: MPACT** of the project (short-term, long-term indicators), **dissemination and exploitation**, and **sustainability** of project results

- **Logical Framework Matrix** (LFM): a document giving an overview of the project design; monitoring tool
- **Work plan:** a chart presenting the project implementation schedule

**H. Work packages:** details about activities to be carried out and results to which they will lead

I. Special Mobility Strand – (not applicable any more in 2018)

**J. Other EU Grants:** previous EU projects and other project proposals submitted involving partners

K. Budget tables (Excel doc): budget in various breakdowns.

**CBHE Award Criteria**

Award Criterion	Max. number of points
RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT	30
QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION	30
QUALITY OF THE PROJECT TEAM AND COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS	20
IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Minimum scores of a proposal to be considered for funding:  
at least 60 points in total, including at least 15 points for RELEVANCE**

## 4 key aspects of a CBHE proposal discussed in various sections of the Application and covered by the Award Criteria:

- **RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT:** link between the project and CBHE **objectives and priorities**, **specific needs** and development **strategies** in the Partner Country/ies; **innovative character** of the project; **European added value of the project:** why similar results could not be achieved through national, regional or local funding  
⇒ Sections B, C and E of the Application Form
- **PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION:** **consistency** between project objectives, activities and results; project **methodology**; work plan / **implementation schedule**; project **budget and cost-effectiveness**; **overall consistency** of the project; incl. quality assurance of the project  
⇒ Sections F and H (Work Packages), LFM, Work plan, Excel budget tables of the Application Form
- **PROJECT TEAM AND COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS:** **expertise** of, and **complementarity** between the partners; **distribution of tasks**; **cooperation, communication** and **project management** arrangements  
⇒ Sections D and H (Work Packages) of the Application Form
- **IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT:** project **impact**; **dissemination** and **exploitation** of project results; measures ensuring **sustainability of project results**  
⇒ Sections G and H (Work Packages)

## RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT (1)

Sections C  
& E of the  
Application

**Key issues which you need to address in your proposal**

**... and where experts quite often find weaknesses:**

- **Links** between the **project** and:
  - CBHE **priorities** for the Partner Countries / Regions
  - **national strategies** for HE in the participating Partner Country/ies
  - **strategies** of the participating **Partner Country HEIs**
- **Identification of target groups** of the project
- **Identification of specific needs / analysis of needs** in the participating Partner Country/ies, which the project will address



**RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT (2)**

**Your proposal and CBHE themes & CBHE priorities for Partner Countries / Regions**

Choose 1 of the 3 CBHE themes that your project focuses on

**Curriculum development: *Joint Projects only***

**Modernisation of governance, management and functioning of HEIs / higher education: *Joint and Structural Projects***

**Strengthening of relations between HEIs and the wider economic and social environment: *Joint and Structural Projects***

Choose max. 2 CBHE priorities for the participating Partner Country/ies that your project focuses on

**Specific priorities defined for each of the 3 project themes**

**Examples :**

**Curriculum Development** (subject area priorities): Teacher Training

**Modernisation of governance**: Internationalisation of HE / HEIs

**Strengthening of relations**: University-enterprise cooperation

**Projects which DO NOT CLEARLY ADDRESS the priorities are NOT FUNDED. Make sure your proposal shows how both its objectives and results address the chosen priorities.**

## RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT (3)

How is your project linked to the Partner Country national strategy/ies, and development strategies of the participating Partner Country organisations?

- Refer in your proposal to:
  - (a) **specific national strategy(-ies)** (e.g. DHET's (Dpt. of HE and Training) White Paper for Post-School Education and Training) and its / their specific priorities);
  - (b) **specific strategy(-ies) or document(s) of the participating organisations** (e.g. the Internationalisation Strategy of University X) and its / their specific priorities

Vaguely or not addressed at all in many proposals

## RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT (4)

**What target groups in the Partner Country/ies does your project address:  
who does your project seek to benefit?**

*E.g. students, academic staff, administrative staff, university management, external stakeholders, incl. national authorities, employers.....*

**When identifying the target group(s) of your project, specify and quantify the group(s)**

*E.g. 20 students of the Master's degree programme in the field of xxx OR 8 international relations staff in each participating Partner Country university OR provide a different number for each participating University*

**Weaknesses in proposals: target groups identified vaguely and / or not quantified ⇒ difficult to demonstrate (and assess) the impact of the project**

**RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT (5)**

What specific needs / problems in the Partner Country/ies does your project seek to address?

**Vaguely identified needs: a weak point of proposals**

- Do a **preliminary needs analysis**. A more in-depth analysis in the project cannot replace a pre-project analysis – you need to convince experts that your project is really needed
- Where appropriate and possible, discuss needs / problems at 3 levels:
  - **national level**: Partner Country HE system as a whole / ,systemic' problems; key level for Structural Projects
  - **institutional level**: each of the participating Partner Organisations
  - **individual level**: students, staff, ...
- Provide **concrete evidence** to underpin your needs analysis (e.g. statistics such as unemployment rates, mobility data, findings from a survey on a specific topic) and refer to **specific sources** (e.g. official or internal statistical publication, study, report, survey)

**QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION (1)**

Sections F  
& H (Work  
Packages),  
LFM, Work  
Plan, Excel  
Budget

**Key issues which you need to consider and discuss in the proposal  
... and where various weaknesses are found in proposals:**

- ☞ **Project objectives, expected results and activities to be carried out to achieve the expected results and the objectives of the project**
- ☞ **Quality control arrangements for the project**
- ☞ **Project budget and cost-effectiveness**



## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION (2)

**Project objectives, expected results  
and activities to be carried out to achieve objectives and results**

**Wider objective:** broader / longer-term impact or result to which the project contributes

**Example:** To ensure that the targeted Partner Country University is in a position to offer education that meets the changing needs of the economic environment

**Specific objective:** direct impact or result expected at the end of the project

**Example:** To bring undergraduate curricula, teaching methods and materials of the Faculty of Economics of the University of X into line with the Bologna requirements by December 2018

- **Be focused:** Don't set too many specific objectives
- Make sure that the **specific project objective(s)** is / are :
  - **SMART:** specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound
  - **Clearly linked with CBHE priorities and the specific needs** in the participating Partner Country/ies that the project seeks to address

*Examples taken from / based on the CBHE ,Instructions for completing the Application Package'*



## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION (3)

**Project objectives, expected results  
and activities to be carried out to achieve objectives and results – cont.**

**Outputs:** tangible and measurable results (,products') **Outcomes:** intangible effects

**Examples: Outputs:** 5 new / restructured courses for an undergraduate programme in the field of xxx.

**Outcomes:** new teaching skills acquired by staff

**Make sure the project will lead to results which address the chosen CBHE priorities**

**Activities:** actions taken / tasks carried out to deliver the outputs identified

**Examples:** analysis of staff training needs or employers' needs; development of a course

**Provide details about results and related activities;** e.g. for degree courses as an output and related activities: number, level, area and indicative contents of courses to be developed or revised; duration; mode of delivery; teaching & learning methods and resources; indicative number of students to be enrolled

***Examples taken from / based on the CBHE ,Instructions for completing the Application Package'***



## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION (4)

### **Double-check that:**

- **planned activities lead to all of the expected results (outputs / outcomes) and that the results (outputs / outcomes) lead to all of the identified specific objectives of the project (consistency between the project objectives, results and activities)**



## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION – QA (5)

### Quality control / assurance arrangements for the project

- Consider what quality assurance mechanisms and tools will be best suitable for your project; e.g. internal and / or external project evaluation; regular reviews by a project QA Committee; a satisfaction survey among students / staff / project Partners; a project QA Handbook; ...
- For each QA mechanism and / or tool, explain:
  - what it will cover (which outputs / results, such as: programme / course, strategy or processes, project management)
  - how and how often it will be used
  - who will be responsible
  - how quality monitoring / assessment findings will be used for improvement
- Additionally, for project evaluation (compulsory QA mechanism): make a clear distinction between internal and external evaluation (in case both are planned).

## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION (6)

**Project cost-effectiveness:** how you can ensure that that the results of your project are achieved in the **most economical way**

Section F.3 of  
the Application

### Examples:

- Don't inflate costs: budget based on **minimum inputs** required to achieve results
- Consider '**economies of scale**', e.g. training a large number of people at the lowest possible cost: training a large(r) number of Partner Country staff locally by Programme Country partners rather than a small number in a Programme Country OR training a small number of 'trainers' in a Programme Country followed by cascade training in the Partner Country
- Combine **travels for different purposes** (e.g. a project management meeting and a staff training seminar) wherever possible

**Make sure your cost-effectiveness arrangements are indeed reflected in the project budget**

## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION (7)

**Budget:** Excel tables presenting the project budget in various breakdowns (e.g. by type of cost, Work Package, Partner, ...)

### Types of costs covered by the CBHE grant

- **STAFF COSTS (max. 40%):** 4 Staff Categories: Manager, Teacher / Trainer / Researcher, Technician, Administrator. Staff Category to be chosen according to the type of task (not the status or title of the individual performing the task).
- **MOBILITY COSTS: TRAVEL COSTS** and **COSTS OF STAY** for both staff and students
- **EQUIPMENT COSTS (max. 30%):** Only for HEIs in Partner Countries
- **SUB-CONTRACTING COSTS (max. 10%):** Only for tasks which cannot be performed by the Partners; e.g. project evaluation and auditing; IT and language courses; translation services; website design & maintenance

**Costs to be covered by the co-financing contribution from the Partners:**  
e.g. dissemination, publishing, overheads costs

## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION: PROJECT COST-EFFECTIVENESS & BUDGET (8)

### Most typical budget-related weaknesses in proposals

#### STAFF COSTS

- **Insufficient justification of costs:** too little or vague information about the project activities and results provided in the relevant sections of the proposal
- **Overestimated costs**
- **Inappropriate Staff Category** (Manager, Teacher / Trainer / Researcher, Technician or Administrator) used to calculate costs: based on the status or title of the individual and not on the type of task to be performed

#### EQUIPMENT COSTS

- **Insufficient justification of costs:** 1) **Equipment items** to be purchased **not specified** in the Excel tables; 2) too little or vague information about **specific equipment needs** of Partner Country HEIs; 3) **link** between equipment and **project objectives or results** not explained ⇒ provide a detailed explanation in Section H (Work Packages)

**QUALITY OF THE PROJECT TEAM AND COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS (1)**

Sections A, D, E.2 and H

**PROJECT CONSORTIUM: the Applicant / Coordinator, Partners / Partner Organisations, and Associated Partners (optional)****Partners:**

- contribute directly to all key project activities
- sign a Mandate (a document where they undertake to adhere to the Grant Agreement for the project if it is funded).
- benefit from the project grant

**Associated partners:**

- have a limited and supporting role, contributing indirectly to specific activities (e.g. dissemination of project results); cannot be responsible for any of the key project activities
- do not sign a Mandate
- are not eligible to benefit from the project grant

➔ You have no 'influence' over Associated Partners

➔ Any organisation whose involvement is crucial to the achievement of project results and objectives (e.g. enterprises in a project focusing on university-enterprise cooperation) should be involved as a Partner / Partner Organisation

## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT TEAM AND COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS (2)

### Choice and presentation of Partners and key staff to be involved from each Partner Organisation

#### Tips based on weaknesses in proposals

- ☞ Keep in mind that **national authorities** are obligatorily involved as a Partner Organisation in a **Structural Project**
- ☞ Choose your partners on the basis of their **specific and complementary expertise**
- ☞ Involve **more than 1 key staff member** at each Partner Organisation (where there is only 1, their unavailability may pose a risk to project implementation)
- ☞ Make sure the expertise of the key staff from each Partner Organisation covers jointly both academic or other **content-related aspects** of the project (e.g. curriculum development) *and* **project management**
- ☞ When presenting the Partners and their key staff in your proposal, focus on the activities of the Partner Organisations and the expertise of key staff which are **specifically related to the project**, and highlight the **complementarity between the Partners** and their expertise

## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT TEAM AND COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS (3)

**What you need to consider to ensure effective cooperation and project management ... and what is often not presented convincingly in proposals?**

- **How the project will be managed**
- **How tasks will be distributed among the Partners**
- **How and how often the Partners will communicate**

## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT TEAM AND COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS (4)

### How the project will be managed?

#### A good proposal explains:

- at which levels the project will be managed and by whom; 3 possible levels: the international / project level, national / Partner Country level and institutional / local level (each Partner Organisation)
- bodies to be established at each relevant level (e.g. a Project Management Board at the project / international level; a National and / or Local Teams or Contact Persons): the composition and specific responsibilities of each body and relationships between them
- the decision-making process: who will take decisions on what matters, and how (e.g. consensus or majority voting)
- a mechanism for resolving conflicts among the Partners

#### Make sure that:

- all Partner Organisations are involved in the project management body and decision-making as equal partners
- the role of the Applicant / Coordinator is not too dominant; the project is a joint initiative of the consortium → a sense of ownership



## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT TEAM AND COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS (5)

### How tasks will be distributed among the Partners?

- ☞ Allocate specific tasks to each Partner and highlight the specificity in the description of Partners' tasks. **Exactly the same tasks for a number of Partners: a weakness often highlighted by experts**
- ☞ Distribute tasks:
  - ☞ according to the **expertise** of the Partner Organisations to ensure high quality of project results
  - ☞ in a **balanced way** among the Partners to encourage a sense of ownership of the project
- ☞ Identify clearly Partners Organisations acting as **Leaders** of Work Packages (groups of activities / tasks)
- ☞ Make sure that :
  - ☞ **Partner Country Organisations** are extensively and **actively involved**, also as Work Package Leaders
  - ☞ **National authorities from the Partner Country/ies** have a **clearly defined and substantial role** in a Structural Project



QUALITY OF THE PROJECT TEAM AND COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS (6)

**How and how often the Partners will communicate?**

**An aspect often ,neglected' in proposals involving Partners who have worked together before and have well-established communication channels**

⇒ **Methods / channels (e.g. face-to-face and virtual / online meetings, Skype, email, telephone) and the frequency of communication using each method to be discussed in the proposal**

**Make sure the partners communicate and report on progress in project implementation often enough to make timely adjustments if something goes wrong**

## IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY (1)

Sections G  
and H (WPs)

**4 aspects to be considered and described in detail in the proposal:**

<b>IMPACT OF THE PROJECT</b>	<b>Benefits</b> from the project for target groups <b>at various levels</b> (faculty / institutional, local, regional, national and / or European) / beneficial <b>changes</b> resulting from the project <u>during its lifecycle and after its completion</u>
<b>DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Dissemination:</b> Activities / measures aimed at spreading information about the project / raising awareness / making the project visible beyond the circle of direct participants</li><li>• <b>Exploitation:</b> Activities / measures aimed at mainstreaming and multiplying project results beyond the circle of direct beneficiaries</li></ul> Both increase the project impact and contribute to its sustainability
<b>SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT RESULTS</b>	Activities / measures ensuring that the results of the project will last beyond the project lifetime

## IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY (2)

### A good dissemination and exploitation strategy:

Defines clearly **project results** to be disseminated, mainstreamed and / or multiplied

Identifies precisely and quantifies **target groups / users** both within Partner Organisations (students, staff, management) and outside them (other HEIs, national authorities, employers ...)

Covers both **internal and external activities** (within and outside Partner Organisations) and makes a clear **distinction** between them

Uses a **wide variety of methods or tools** (websites, social media, events such as conferences or fairs, training sessions, printed materials, ...), each suitable for a **specific target group**

Envisages dissemination activities starting early and exploitation activities starting when relevant results are available, and both types of activities continuing throughout the project and beyond it

Describes the **role of each Partner** (incl. Associated Partners where applicable)

Involves **institutions / organisations** which are **well-placed to spread information** widely and / or **mainstream results** (e.g. national authorities, associations, networks)

## IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY (3)

### A good sustainability strategy:

- ⇒ **specifies the project results** which will be maintained and **activities** which will continue after the end of project funding  
E.g. Sustainable results: a new / updated programme, a new unit (e.g. an International Relations Office), strategy or network; sustainable activities: joint supervision of PhD students by Partner and Programme Country partners; activities involving HEIs and enterprises such as student practical placements
- ⇒ envisages **concrete measures** / activities to ensure **sustainability at 3 levels**: institutional, financial and policy levels
- ⇒ plans such activities **as early as possible** in the project
- ⇒ involves **faculty / institutional and / or national authorities** (if they are not represented in the project) to ensure their support for project results (e.g. through regular update meetings or consultations)

## IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY (4)

How you can ensure ...

- ☞ **Institutional sustainability:** providing a formal basis / framework for the maintenance of project results at faculty/institutional level:
  - ☞ **Official approval / adoption / endorsement of project results** (*through internal university regulations, decisions at the relevant level, agreements*) as a **clearly defined project activity**; e.g. amending the Statutes or other official documents of the university to include a new unit established in the project; national accreditation of a programme; a decision of the university authorities adopting a strategy developed in the project; cooperation agreements with the project Partners or enterprises
  - ☞ **Adequate training for a sufficient number of staff** in the participating Partner Country organisations to use the project outputs ... e.g. to teach a new course, to implement a strategy
  - ☞ **Upgrading of facilities** ... e.g. purchase of equipment to deliver a new programme

## IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY (5)

How you can ensure ...

- ☞ **Financial sustainability:** securing funding for the maintenance of results; **specific sources of funding** to be indicated for each sustainable result and activity: the university's own budget and / or external sources, e.g. national budget, enterprises, foundations, international and EU programmes
- ☞ **Sustainability at policy level:** encouraging, initiating or facilitating change beyond the Partner Organisations (*multiplier effect*) through dissemination and exploitation activities targeted at other HEIs and national authorities. **Important in all projects and essential in a Structural Project**



## IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY (6)

Structural Projects should have sustainable impact at national level

Make sure that:

- the national authorities play a **key role** in all project activities, including **dissemination and exploitation activities**
- where possible, **project results** are **officially approved / endorsed / adopted** by the national authorities to be **mainstreamed** (e.g. integrated into a national policy, national guidelines, draft legislation....)
- approval / endorsement by the relevant national authorities is envisaged in the project as a **clearly defined activity**



**Structural  
Projects**



## **A compulsory reading list for Applicants:**

### **Detailed guidelines in:**

- Erasmus+ Programme Guide, CBHE Sections
- CBHE Priorities for Partner Countries / Regions
- CBHE Application Form
- CBHE Instructions for Completing the Application Package